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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2013/14	$68,517,000
Expenditure for 2013/14	$68,496,200
Unencumbered balance for 2013/14	$20,800
Appropriation for 2014/15	$70,338,600
Projected expenditure 2014/15[a]	$69,749,600
Estimated unencumbered balance for 2014/15	$589,000
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2015/16	$71,696,000
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2015/16	$68,410,442

[a] Estimate as at 31 January 2015.

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I. Introduction

1. **The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraphs 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 71 and 74 below would entail a reduction of $3,285,558 to the proposed budget for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (UNLB), for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.**

2. During its consideration of the financing of UNLB, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 27 March 2015. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee are listed at the end of the present report.

3. The Secretary-General's proposals for UNLB for 2015/16 should be considered in conjunction with his fifth annual report on progress in the implementation of the global field support strategy and annexes I and II to his report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (see A/69/651 and A/69/751/Rev.1), as well as the observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors emanating from its audit of the implementation of the global field support strategy (see A/69/5 (Vol. II), chap. II). The Advisory Committee's observations and recommendations on the findings of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations and on the implementation of the global field support strategy can be found in its related reports (A/69/838, A/69/839 and A/69/874, respectively).

II. Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014

4. By its resolution 67/288, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $68,517,000 gross ($62,200,600 net) for the maintenance of UNLB for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. The full amount has been assessed on Member States. Expenditures for the period totalled $68,496,200 gross ($62,060,100 net), resulting in an unencumbered balance of $20,800 gross ($20,800 net), reflecting full implementation of the budget. An analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the relevant budget performance report (A/69/585 and Corr.1).

5. Overall, the implementation of the budget reflects the net effect of both higher- and lower-than-budgeted requirements under various categories of expenditure and the redeployment of approximately $1.9 million from operational to civilian personnel costs. Higher-than-budgeted expenditures were incurred under civilian personnel costs ($1,879,100, or 4.5 per cent), owing to: (a) lower-than-budgeted vacancy rates for international staff (12.3 per cent actual, compared with the 17 per cent budgeted) and national staff (4.9 per cent actual, compared with the 6 per cent budgeted); (b) the negative impact of the depreciation of the United States dollar against the euro, resulting in additional requirements under national staff; and (c) additional requirements for general temporary assistance to support the implementation of Umoja at field missions. The report indicates that a number of activities/projects were reprioritized to cover the additional requirements for civilian staff, resulting in reduced requirements under: (a) communications, owing

to a reduction in the minimum mandatory requirements for maintenance services and the utilization of telecommunications inventory instead of purchasing new spare parts and devices; (b) facilities and infrastructure, owing mainly to a reduction in the minimum mandatory requirements for maintenance services; and (c) official travel, owing to a decision to reduce travel and replace it, when practicable, with videoconferencing and teleconferencing.

6. The Secretary-General also indicates that, in accordance with the new chart of accounts, some of the expenditures previously recorded under communications are now recorded under information technology and others previously recorded under consultants are now recorded under other supplies, services and equipment, giving rise to variances under those expenditure categories.

7. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the information presented in the budget performance report with respect to individual objects of expenditure can be found, where relevant, in the discussion of the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 in section IV below.

III. Financial position and information on performance for the current period

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that as at 31 January 2015, expenditure for the 2014/15 period amounted to $40,720,200 gross, against an apportionment of $70,338,600 gross. For the entire financial period, current and projected expenditures amount to $69,749,600, leaving a projected unencumbered balance of $589,000. As at 10 February 2015, available cash amounted to $115,800,000 (including cash available for strategic deployment stocks), inclusive of a three-month operating reserve in the amount of $17,585,000.

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that as at 31 January 2015, the human resources incumbency of UNLB was as follows:

Category	*Authorized*[a]	*Planned*	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
UNLB, excluding tenant units				
Posts				
International staff	84	74	76	11.8
National staff	279	262	268	3.9
General temporary assistance				
International staff	5	4	1	80.0
National staff	8	6	4	50.0
Tenant units				
Posts				
International staff	43	37	36	16.3
National staff	5	5	5	0.0

Category	*Authorized*[a]	*Planned*	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Total, UNLB, including tenant units				
Posts				
International staff	127	110	112	11.8
National staff	284	267	273	3.9
General temporary assistance				
International staff	5	5	1	80.0
National staff	8	6	4	50.0

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period.

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016

A. Objective and planned results

10. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for UNLB for 2015/16 (A/69/733/Rev.1), the Base is being reprofiled as the Global Service Centre in the context of the global field support strategy, and the mandate of the Centre is to ensure efficient and effective field missions. The Secretary-General indicates that the Centre's major operational and resourcing priorities for 2015/16 are based on the end-state vision of the global field support strategy and the continued evolvement of the Centre from a logistics base, focused primarily on transportation and distribution services, to an integrated operational centre for logistics, supply chain, and information and communications technology. In addition, under the strategic direction of the Department of Field Support and in close consultation with the Procurement Division of the Department of Management at Headquarters, the Centre will become a hub for global supply chain management, with specialization and right sourcing as its guiding principles.

11. The Advisory Committee recalls that the global field support strategy was proposed by the Secretary-General in 2010 as a five-year initiative to transform the delivery of services to field missions. In his fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/68/637 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General indicated that the implementation period of the strategy would end, as planned, in mid-2015 and that the Organization would not seek an extension. The mainstreaming of the completed tools, structures and approaches of the strategy into the ongoing work of the Secretariat would be a major objective for 2015/16. In paragraphs 313-340 of chapter II of its report on the financial statements of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period ended 30 June 2014 (A/69/5 (Vol. II)), the Board of Auditors made a number of observations and recommendations on the implementation of the strategy, including supply chain management, the role of the Global Service Centre as a clearing house, and progress on various activities under modularization, enabling capacities and shared services. While recognizing that considerable progress had been made, the Board highlighted that the achievement of the end-state vision and key performance indicators by the end of the implementation period of the strategy in June 2015 was at risk. The

Board also noted the statement of the Secretary-General that not all achievements in each pillar will have been realized by June 2015 and that these will be pursued as priority tasks during 2015/16.

12. **The Advisory Committee stresses the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide, in his next budget performance report on UNLB, comprehensive information on the progress made towards the achievement of the end-state vision of the global field support strategy for the supply chain management and modularization pillar and the reprofiling of UNLB as the Global Service Centre under the shared services pillar. The Secretary-General should also provide explanations regarding the targets that were not achieved within the five-year implementation time frame of the strategy as well as a timeline for meeting those targets in the future. The next budget proposal for UNLB should also include information on plans for the mainstreaming of the completed tools, structures and approaches of the strategy into the ongoing work of the Secretariat in the post-global field support strategy period and should reflect in the results-based-budgeting frameworks for each service the related objectives, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and outputs.**

13. In addition, with regard to progress made against the key performance indicators relevant to the Global Service Centre as set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/731), the Board notes that the Centre has not conducted biannual surveys to ascertain client satisfaction ratings, nor has it established service line key performance indicators or corporate key performance indicators for shared services. **The Advisory Committee considers that the key objective of a service centre is to provide high-quality, timely and cost-effective services, and stresses the importance of tracking and reporting on customer satisfaction levels as well as on issues/complaints. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to put into place effective and reliable methods for monitoring complaints and measuring customer satisfaction and to include in the results-based-budgeting frameworks for the Global Service Centre relevant indicators of achievement for assessing performance and measuring progress in the provision of customer service.**

14. The Secretary-General indicates that the proposed budget for 2015/16 takes into account a number of management initiatives to address the current and future operational and organizational needs of UNLB. The Base comprises an Office of the Director, three main functional areas (logistics services; geospatial, information and telecommunications technologies services; and base support services) and three tenant units.

Regional mission cooperation, partnerships, country team coordination and integrated missions

15. In paragraphs 36-39 of the proposed budget, the Secretary-General provides information on regional mission cooperation, partnerships, country team coordination and integrated missions. As indicated, the Global Service Centre will continue to provide telecommunications services to special political missions and a number of United Nations system entities and collaborate with the World Food

Programme, on a cost-sharing basis, in such areas as aviation and medical services. The Regional Aviation Safety Office of UNLB will also continue to provide advice and assistance to affiliated missions. In addition, the Director of UNLB is the designated Area Security Coordinator for all United Nations system offices in the area, including the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the International Computing Centre.

Tenant units

16. Three tenant units, with a total of 48 posts, will continue to be hosted at UNLB: the Standing Police Capacity (37 posts), the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity (6 posts) and the Integrated Training Service (5 posts) (see A/67/722, paras. 31-35, and A/67/582, paras. 15-18). The Advisory Committee was informed that the tenant units would also continue to report to their respective parent offices at Headquarters, in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Office of the Director

17. The Office of the Director comprises the immediate Office of the Director, the Field Contracts Management Unit, the Regional Aviation Safety Office, the Security Office and the Field Central Review Board Unit.

Conduct and discipline

18. The Secretary-General states that he is resubmitting a request for a post of Conduct and Discipline Officer at the P-4 level in Brindisi (see A/69/733/Rev.1, para. 40) in view of the increased needs of the Global Service Centre for conduct and discipline prevention measures and enforcement activities, as a result of the increase in the number of personnel in both Brindisi and Valencia, Spain. The incumbent would be responsible for: (a) carrying out all prevention activities, including training for all UNLB personnel and predeployment training; (b) processing allegations of misconduct at the Centre and providing advice to field personnel; and (c) advising the Director of the Centre on conduct and discipline matters, drafting policies and conducting targeted risk assessments. Upon enquiry as to the workload related to the training, outreach and preventive activities, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Officer would provide services for the 456 proposed personnel for UNLB in 2015/16 and that an average of 340 staff members attended civilian predeployment training during a given year. The Committee was also informed, upon request, that a total of 16 conduct and discipline cases had been recorded during the seven-year period from 2008 to 2014, comprising 10 category 1 and 4 category 2 cases. However, that number did not reflect total activity or the number of cases regarding which advice, support and guidance had been provided to management and staff and that had been dealt with without recourse to the formal system. **The Advisory Committee does not object to the Secretary-General's proposal.**

Finance and Budget Section

19. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of a Finance and Budget Section, to be formed from the merger of the Finance Section, currently in the Base Support Service, with the budget function, currently carried out in the immediate Office of the Director. The new Finance and Budget Section would comprise a total

of 14 posts, including 12 posts proposed for redeployment from the Finance Section (1 P-4, 1 Field Service and 10 national General Service), as well as the 2 posts of Budget Officer and Budget Assistant (1 P-3 and 1 Field Service) in the immediate Office of the Director. The Secretary-General states that this merger will improve the monitoring and reporting structure of the Global Service Centre and facilitate better alignment between budget formulation and the utilization of funds and reporting of expenditure. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the merger of these two functions presents opportunities for consolidation and optimization of the use of resources. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to review the structure of the proposed Finance and Budget Section with a view to seeking synergies, and to present proposals for a more streamlined structure for the Section in his next budget proposal.**

Base Support Service

20. The Base Support Service of UNLB comprises the Procurement Section, Human Resources, Campus Support, the Conference Service and Learning Centre and the Medical Clinic. The Secretary-General indicates that the Base Support Service will continue to provide support for essential services required for the operation of UNLB, such as facilities management, human resources management, procurement, conference and learning services, the clinic and ancillary support services, such as dispatch, register, archives and the Base Contact Centre.

21. The Secretary-General indicates that the Base Support Service is evolving into a service provider of expertise in administrative support and has adjusted its structure to focus on service delivery and staff development in order to meet the administrative and back-office support needs of field missions in the areas of procurement and human resources and in hosting conferences. The services in question are delivered through on-site support, help-desk support and remote/back-office support. A Base Contact Centre has been established, which serves as the central point of contact on all issues related to the activities of UNLB and also provides tier 1 and tier 2 information technology (IT) help-desk support services. The Secretary-General also indicates that the expansion of shared services is a key initiative that will continue, in line with the global field support strategy, to build on the early experiences of establishing the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, with the primary objective of consolidating in service centres non-location-dependent transactional activities in finance and human resources.

22. In that connection, the Secretary-General indicates that the Global Service Centre continues to provide shared services to a number of small field missions, in the administrative areas of finance, human resources and procurement. For example, the procurement operations of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa are managed by the Base Support Service. In the case of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), 15 UNSMIL mission support posts are embedded within the procurement, logistics, information and communications technology (ICT), human resources, travel and finance sections to provide back-office services to the Mission on the basis of a service level agreement under which the Centre is responsible for providing critical administrative and technical support services to UNSMIL. The Advisory Committee was informed that the total staffing of the Mission Support Division of UNSMIL comprised 105 positions approved for 2014, including the 15 positions located at

Brindisi,[1] and that the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council currently before the Committee (A/69/363/Add.6) included proposals for the abolishment of a total of 47 positions and the establishment of 7 new positions in the Mission Support Division.

23. The information set out above shows that a number of ad hoc arrangements are in place for the provision by UNLB of shared services to a variety of missions under various organizational and cost recovery arrangements. While recalling that some of the arrangements were adopted in response to situations requiring rapid response, for example, the outposting at UNLB of certain mission personnel to provide selected administrative support functions at the time of the establishment of UNSMIL, the Advisory Committee points out that the role of the Global Service Centre, as defined under the new service delivery model for the global field support strategy described in the fifth progress report of the Secretary-General (see A/69/651, paras. 14 and 15, figures II and III), is to provide global operational support functions such as global contracts management, strategic deployment stocks management, global acquisition planning and Member State operational interaction. The model also stipulates that administrative transactional functions, regional ICT services and regional logistics cooperation are provided through shared services, delivered through shared service centres or structured inter-mission support arrangements.

24. **The Advisory Committee considers that there is a need for greater clarification on the various arrangements in place for the provision of administrative support to field missions and full transparency regarding the resources made available to UNLB and cost recovery arrangements. It therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide henceforth, in the performance reports and budgetary proposals for UNLB, comprehensive information on the posts, positions and other resources provided by missions/offices with details on the services provided to each mission. In parallel, mission budgets should clearly show the corresponding resources that are being provided to UNLB or reduced. The Secretary-General should also provide details on the budgeting parameters applied to estimated requirements for the posts and positions provided to or outposted at UNLB (salaries, other staff costs, common staff costs, temporary assistance, vacancy rates, related operational costs and any other relevant factors), as well as comparative estimates of the resource requirements related to those posts/positions had they been located in the providing mission/department/office.**

[1] Distributed as follows: an Office of the Chief of Mission Support (1 D-1, 1 P-4, 2 P-3, 5 Field Service and 1 Local level); a Personnel Section (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 6 Field Service, 3 Local level and 1 United Nations Volunteer); a Finance Section (5 Field Service and 2 Local level); a Procurement Section (1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 1 National Professional Officer); a Communications and Information Technology Section (4 Field Service, 7 Local level and 1 United Nations Volunteer); a Central Warehouse and Distribution Section (1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 5 Local level); a Property Management Section (3 Field Service and 2 Local level); a Medical Section (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 Field Service, 1 Local level and 1 United Nations Volunteer); an Engineering and Facilities Management Section (1 P-3, 3 Field Service and 5 Local level); and a Transport Section (3 Field Service, 27 Local level and 2 United Nations Volunteer).

25. **In addition, the Advisory Committee stresses that, before the Base Support Service is further developed as a service provider of expertise in administrative support (see above), there is a need for an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided as well as of the improvements in the quality and timeliness of the services delivered to clients. In that connection, the Committee recalls that the Secretary-General regularly cites the principles of the global field support strategy and the light mission footprint model as a justification for many of the arrangements made by UNLB for the provision of services to field missions, as well as for his proposals aimed at further expanding the range of services provided by UNLB (see paras. 35-39 below). The Committee emphasizes, however, that this does not replace or preclude the requirement for the development of a business case and the submission of a detailed proposal and cost/benefit analysis for consideration by the General Assembly.**

Logistics Service

26. The Logistics Service comprises the Central Warehouse and Distribution Section, the Central Maintenance and Repair Section, the Logistics Operations Section, the Property Management Section, the Asset Management Section, the Engineering Standards and Design Centre and the Strategic Air Operations Centre.

27. The Secretary-General indicates that the Logistics Service has concluded its restructuring as a global service provider for the field and that it will assist the Logistics Support Division of the Department of Field Support in implementing a supply chain management model to meet the deliverables of the end-state vision of the global field support strategy. Furthermore, the functions of asset management, liquidation and strategic deployment stocks, which were integrated in 2012/13 within the existing activities of the Service to create the foundation of the supply chain management structure, will continue to be aligned with one another in 2015/16. The Secretary-General also indicates that the modularization project will be concluded as scheduled by 30 June 2015 and will be integrated into the Service as a range of standard services being provided to field operations. The Advisory Committee was informed that achievements under this pillar of the global field support strategy included the completion of various standard designs, including for 50-, 200- and 1,000-person camps, a log base and an airbase.

28. In chapter II of its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II)), the Board noted that there were significant delays in the planning and implementation of reforms in supply chain management and the enabling capacities project, and that much work remained to be done in the final nine months of the global field support strategy to integrate modularization into the regular business processes of peacekeeping operations. It also noted that not all missions were fully adhering to the new policy of the Department of Field Support on the centralized management of mission assets, which stipulates that all missions are required to seek clearance from the Global Service Centre for the acquisition of non-expendable property valued at $1,500 or more prior to any sourcing activity. The Board recommended, inter alia: that steps be taken to set up a vision, strategy and road map for supply chain reforms at the earliest and ensure the implementation of supply chain reforms in support of peacekeeping operations; that the modularization strategic action plan be finalized and approved at the earliest opportunity; that the enabling capacities project be expedited to ensure that service packages can be seamlessly implemented in the

field and help in the rapid deployment of modularized camps; and that a mechanism be established to monitor compliance with the requirement of obtaining clearance from UNLB by the missions prior to sourcing non-expendable assets. **As indicated in paragraph 12 above, the Advisory Committee expects that every effort will be made to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and that details on actual achievements and outstanding targets will be provided in the next performance report.**

Strategic Air Operations Centre

29. The Secretary-General indicates that the Strategic Air Operations Centre will provide operational control, centralized coordination and oversight of out-of-mission-area and inter-mission air movements, as well as analysis of aircraft utilization rates and operating costs. He envisages the development and launch of a global fleet management performance analysis tool to optimize operational effectiveness and allow for the identification of aircraft utilization demand through forecasting.

30. In its report, the Board of Auditors indicated that the Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit of the Centre, which is responsible for exploring possibilities for economies and efficiencies in strategic air operations tasking, planning and coordination without undermining safety and operational requirements, had been unable to achieve its objectives. The Board recommended that the Centre undertake a thorough cost analysis of United Nations fleet operations to identify areas where efficiencies could be achieved (see A/69/5 (Vol. II), chap. II, paras. 183-195).

31. Upon enquiry as to the measures that have been or can be undertaken by the Secretariat to improve aviation management, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Department of Field Support had introduced new methods for managing the acquisition and operation of the Organization's air assets, including: standby air charter agreements; the aviation information management system; and the utilization of the request for proposal system to procure air transport services based on logistical and other requirements piloted at the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2014 (see A/69/751/Rev.1, paras. 110-116). In addition, the Department had initiated, in consultation with the Strategic Air Operations Centre in Brindisi and the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre in Entebbe, an assessment of the respective roles and activities of the Aviation Transport Section of the Logistics Division at Headquarters, the Strategic Air Operations Centre and the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre, with a view to achieving further improvements in the overall management of aviation. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report comprehensively in his next overview report on the results achieved through the implementation of the measures referred to above, as well as on the findings and conclusions resulting from the above-mentioned assessment.**

Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies

32. The Secretary-General states that the restructuring of the Service that started in 2014/15 will continue in 2015/16 and makes several proposals in that regard: (a) to unify the currently mirrored sections of the Service between Brindisi and

Valencia (Satellite Engineering, Data Centre Support, Network Support and Technology Infrastructure Support); (b) to create a Remote Mission Support Section within the Service; (c) to establish a cross-cutting function for information technology security and service management; (d) to continue the centralization of field missions' geospatial information systems at the Global Service Centre; (e) to relocate the post of Chief of the Service (D-1) to the facility in Valencia; and (f) to implement a separate coordination framework for the provision of ICT services to entities that are not supported by the Department of Field Support. In addition, the Secretary-General indicates that the facility in Valencia has reached its maximum capacity and that he has initiated discussions with the host Government to explore options for expanding its current capacity.

Unification of mirrored sections

33. The Secretary-General proposes to unify the currently mirrored sections between Brindisi and Valencia (Network Support, Satellite Engineering, Data Centre Support and Technology Infrastructure Support). The structure of the Service after the proposed unification is shown in the organization chart set out in annex II to the proposed budget. Compared with the current configuration, with mirrored sections at the two sites (see A/68/727, annex II), the staffing of the unified sections would be modified as shown in the table below. The unification would result in the reduction of a total of 5 posts (1 P-4, 2 Field Service and 2 national General Service) from the total of 50 posts (4 P-4, 2 P-3, 11 Field Service and 33 national General Service) under the current mirrored configuration to 45 posts (3 P-4, 2 P-3, 9 Field Service and 31 national General Service), with the redeployment of 3 posts (1 P-4, 1 Field Service and 1 national General Service) to the proposed Remote Mission Support Section and the abolishment of 2 posts (1 Field Service and 1 national General Service).

Section	*Mirrored structure — number of approved posts*	*Unified structure — number of proposed posts*
Network Support	Brindisi: 6 (1 P-3, 2 FS, 3 NGS) Valencia: 3 (1 P-4, 1 FS, 1 NGS)	8 (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 3 FS, 3 NGS)
Satellite Engineering	Brindisi: 6 (1 P-4, 2 FS, 3 NGS) Valencia: 6 (1 P-4, 1 FS, 4 NGS)	11 (1 P-4, 3 FS, 7 NGS)
Data Centre Support	Brindisi: 8 (1 P-3, 2 FS, 5 NGS) Valencia: 2 (1 FS, 1 NGS)	8 (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 FS, 5 NGS)
Technology Infrastructure Support	Brindisi: 16 (1 FS, 15 NGS) Valencia: 3 (1 FS, 2 NGS)	18 (2 FS, 16 NGS)

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; NGS, national General Service.

34. **The Advisory Committee does not object to the proposed arrangement and recommends that the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's proposal for the unification of the currently mirrored sections between Brindisi and Valencia (Network Support, Satellite Engineering, Data Centre Support and Technology Infrastructure Support). In so doing, the Committee nevertheless emphasizes that the unification of the sections does not lessen the**

obligation of the Secretary-General to submit a proposal and obtain the Assembly's approval for the relocation of any post or position from Brindisi to Valencia and vice versa, and also stresses the need for the prudent use of travel resources (see para. 70 below). The Committee also believes that the unification of the sections should allow for the further consolidation of capacities and optimization of operations. It recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide an assessment of the new arrangement in his next budget submission with proposals for the further streamlining of the organizational structure of the unified sections with a view to achieving savings and efficiency gains. The Committee also recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to show the location of the posts in the organization charts of UNLB and to provide in future submissions a breakdown of resource requirements and expenditures for Brindisi and Valencia, with a view to providing greater transparency and facilitating the consideration by the Assembly of the budgetary proposals and performance reports of UNLB.

Remote Mission Support Section

35. The Secretary-General states that the Global Service Centre currently provides remote mission support services to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), UNSMIL, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and proposes to continue to increase the provision of ICT hosting and technical support services to all field missions through the establishment of a Remote Mission Support Section within the Service (see A/69/733/Rev.1, paras. 18 and 65-69). As indicated in paragraph 18 of the proposed budget and in the list of the outputs of the Service, the Remote Mission Support Section will provide activities such as the hosting of virtual data centres, infrastructure monitoring, server support, remote virtual desktop support and mobility services for six peacekeeping missions. The Secretary-General proposes a staffing complement of 23 posts/positions (3 P-4, 1 P-3, 5 Field Service and 14 national General Service) through the redeployment of 3 posts and the establishment of 20 general temporary positions, comprising 14 positions in support of MINUSMA and 6 in support of MINUSCA (ibid., paras. 65-69). The Secretary-General indicates that these positions have not been included in the budget proposals of the missions.

36. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table summarizing the categories-grades, functional titles and functions of the 20 positions proposed for establishment for the Remote Mission Support Section, which is set out in annex I to the present report. The Committee also requested further justification for the various capacities being proposed — 14 positions in support of MINUSMA and 6 in support of MINUSCA — given that the two missions are comparable in terms of funding levels and numbers of uniformed and civilian personnel. It was informed that the provision of remote mission support services to field missions was governed by bilateral service level agreements between the Global Service Centre and field missions established on the basis of the specific needs of the missions, as defined by them. Given that each mission determined its own needs, the nature and the scope of the services to be provided varied from mission to mission. As for the arrangements with the other missions receiving remote support services, the Committee was

informed, upon enquiry, that funding for one General Service post and three contractors was provided by UNSMIL (see also para. 22 above) and that the costs of one contractor were covered by MINURSO. With regard to the savings expected from these arrangements, the Committee was informed that synergies and economies of scale could be realized through the provision of remote mission support services from the centralized infrastructure available at the Global Service Centre.

37. The Secretary-General indicates that 14 positions are currently funded by MINUSMA and are located in the Global Service Centre to provide remote support services to the Mission. For MINUSCA, the six positions required in 2014/15 are being accommodated within existing resources of the Centre. In paragraphs 66 and 69 of the proposed budget, the Secretary-General also states that, following the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report on the budget for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali for 2013/14 (A/68/653), the proposed positions in support of MINUSMA and MINUSCA have not been included in the budgets for the two missions for 2015/16. The Committee recalls that in that report, it had stressed that positions located at Headquarters for the support of peacekeeping operations should only be requested under the support account and should not be reflected in individual mission budgets. In the present case, however, the positions being proposed are not intended to carry out Headquarters backstopping functions but are dedicated to providing direct operational support for a specific mission.

38. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, the establishment of posts at the Global Service Centre in support of specific missions is inconsistent with the concept of a service centre, which, by definition, and as indicated by the Secretary-General in his initial proposals for the global field support strategy (see A/64/633, paras. 22 and 79), is intended to consolidate capacities and to provide centralized and standardized services to a large number of clients, with a view to achieving efficiencies and economies of scale. While recognizing that the current arrangements rapidly provided MINUSCA and MINUSMA with an ICT capacity during the start-up phase, the Committee is of the view that a service delivery model whereby support services are provided to specific clients by dedicated personnel located at shared service centres may not be optimal or applicable Organization-wide over the long term.**

39. **The Advisory Committee considers that there is a need to conduct an in-depth assessment and cost/benefit analysis of recent experience in the provision of ICT infrastructure and technical services to MINUSCA and MINUSMA and, if warranted, to develop a business case for the provision of remote ICT infrastructure and technical support services to all field missions from the Global Service Centre for consideration and approval by the General Assembly before the application of the solution to other missions can be envisaged. The business case should also include comprehensive information on the resources, in terms of personnel, infrastructure, equipment and operating costs, that are expected to be released in field missions as a result of the remote provision of ICT infrastructure and technical services from the Global Service Centre (see also paras. 23-25 above).**

40. **In order to ensure continuity in the provision of remote ICT support services, the Advisory Committee does not object to the Secretary-General's**

proposal for the establishment of 20 general temporary positions in support of MINUSMA and MINUSCA in 2015/16. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present, in his next report, proposals for a sustainable solution with respect to the provision of ICT infrastructure and technical support services to the two missions, as well as to provide greater clarity regarding the various issues outlined above. The Committee also stresses the need to ensure that any proposals submitted are consistent with the Secretary-General's forthcoming reports on the global service delivery model and the implementation of the United Nations ICT strategy (see also A/69/839 and A/69/874).

Information technology security and service management

41. The Secretary-General proposes to establish a cross-cutting management function in Valencia to implement an information technology security and service management framework that will ensure consistent and standardized process management across all functional groups and cover the entire Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies in Brindisi and Valencia. To that end, he proposes to upgrade the post of Information Security Officer (P-4) based in Valencia to a post of Senior Information Security and Service Management Officer (P-5). The Advisory Committee recalls that, in paragraphs 403-418 of chapter II of its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II)), the Board of Auditors noted that there was no formal ICT security policy in place at any of the six missions audited and also observed a number of weaknesses in the area of information security, including: a lack of systematic classification of ICT resources according to sensitivity and criticality; an inadequate information security awareness programme; an inadequate information security incident management programme; an absence of procedures to address threats to cybersecurity; the lack of a vulnerability assessment programme; and the lack of a formal policy for the disposal of ICT assets in conformity with ICT security arrangements. The Committee addresses this issue further in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations.

42. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in its resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of his action plan to strengthen information security as a matter of priority, as set out in his related report (A/67/651/Add.1),[2] to ensure the adoption, without further delay, of the information security policy directive and associated policy documents in a manner that assured accountability at all levels of the Organization and to take prompt remedial action to address any hindrances that might arise to the effective implementation of the action plan or the promulgation and enforcement of information security policies throughout the Secretariat. The Committee also reiterates its recommendation, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 A, that the Secretary-General be requested to ensure the adoption of a common, enterprise-wide approach for information and systems security across the Secretariat based on common policies and tools in a

[2] The action plan was developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology in response to the recommendations issued by the Board of Auditors in its report on the handling of ICT affairs in the Secretariat (A/67/651), in which the Board expressed serious concerns about the lack of an adequately secure information environment and noted that there was no overall approved information security policy or harmonized security environment across the Secretariat (see also A/67/770).

manner that ensures that information security matters are addressed in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible without duplication of efforts or expenditures (see A/68/7/Add.11, para. 15).

43. **The Advisory Committee trusts that a common set of information security policies and tools are being implemented across the Secretariat as mandated by the General Assembly. It recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to report on the above-mentioned information technology security and service management framework in his next overview report, including details on its alignment with the United Nations information security policy and tools being implemented by the Office of Information and Communications Technology.**

Geospatial Information Services Centre

44. The Secretary-General indicates that he will pursue the implementation of the two-year plan, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/284, to centralize and consolidate geospatial information services. He indicates that the workload and the complexity of the Centre are expected to increase significantly because it will be required to provide services to missions with no geospatial capacities (20 field missions/offices) or limited geospatial capacities (7 field missions). Furthermore, he expects the number of geospatial applications to increase by 150 per cent, and estimates that approximately 80 per cent of the administration of geospatial systems that is currently carried out in the field would be provided remotely by the Centre. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of six additional general temporary assistance positions (1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 4 national General Service) for the Geospatial Information Services Centre (see A/69/733/Rev.1, paras. 19-21 and 70 and 71). In paragraphs 123 and 124 of his overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/751/Rev.1), the Secretary-General indicates that, subsequent to the establishment of the 6 positions at UNLB, 19 posts and positions would be abolished at field missions, as follows: 4 posts (1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 2 Field Service) and 2 positions (United Nations Volunteer) at the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; 3 positions (United Nations Volunteer) at MONUSCO; 4 positions (United Nations Volunteer) at the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; 2 posts (1 United Nations Volunteer and 1 national General Service) at the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; 1 post (Field Service) at the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; 1 post (national General Service) at the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia; and 1 post (national General Service) and 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

45. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, at the time of its consideration of the budgetary proposals for MINUSCA for 2014/15, it had been informed that UNLB had not been providing timely geographic information system support, which had resulted in increased expenditure for the provision of the required support for the Mission in Bangui (see A/69/641, para. 47).

46. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report comprehensively in his next progress report on the restructuring effort, including information on the clients of the Service and the total geospatial outputs produced as well as the total ICT capacities and costs dedicated to geospatial information services (including number of staff, contractual personnel, ICT systems, servers and help desks) at Headquarters,**

the Global Service Centre, the Regional Service Centre and each field mission at the start and at the end of the restructuring process. The Secretary-General should also be requested to conduct a customer satisfaction survey and to include the outcome of the survey in his next budget submission (see para. 13 above).

47. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, in paragraph 150 of its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/67/780), it indicated that it had been informed that a total of 161 posts and positions were dedicated to the geographical information function at UNLB and at field missions, reflecting the situation prior to the start of the two-year restructuring plan.[3] **The Advisory Committee considers that the centralization and consolidation of the infrastructure and staffing requirements for the delivery of geographic information services, systems and related resources for peacekeeping operations should lead to significant streamlining of the resources dedicated to geographic information systems, and expects the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts in that regard. The Committee stresses in particular its expectation that the centralization effort under way should result in a significant reduction in the resources dedicated to geographic information systems at the field missions.**

Relocation of the Chief of the Service to the facility in Valencia

48. The Secretary-General is resubmitting his request to relocate the post of Chief of the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies (D-1) from Brindisi to Valencia. He highlights the need for a senior position to provide the requisite level of expertise and experience and to be located in Valencia to oversee and manage the functions of the Valencia facility on a day-to-day basis as a complement to the senior leadership already in place in Brindisi, including the Director of UNLB (D-2). The Secretary-General also states that, in addition to carrying out core ICT management functions, the Chief of the Service would assume the role of Head of Premises in Valencia in accordance with the host country agreement between the United Nations and Spain, and lead all of the representational efforts with the host Government as well as an outreach programme aimed at ensuring that the role of the Valencia facility is known and understood by the local community. The incumbent would also act as area security coordinator and be required to interact with the Designated Official in Spain (Under-Secretary-General). In addition, there is a need to ensure coordination in Valencia given the deployment at the facility of the Enterprise Data Centre, which hosts the United Nations enterprise systems, including Umoja, as well as the presence of Programme Managers of the two key ICT service providers of the Global Service Centre (the International Computing Centre and UNOPS).

49. The Secretary-General indicates that the Brindisi and Valencia facilities operate as twin technology centres in an active-active and load-balanced configuration. The Advisory Committee was informed that the data centres at the two sites mirrored each other and were technically identical so as to ensure resilience. Both data centres remained fully operational at all times and were configured to operate together, with user transactions and other computing tasks

[3] The Secretary-General provides further details on the restructuring plan for the centralization and consolidation of geospatial information services (see A/69/751/Rev.1). The Advisory Committee discusses the issue further in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations.

distributed to one or the other interchangeably, taking into account the volume of network traffic and throughput. In normal operation, each data centre would handle approximately 50 per cent of the workload. However, in case one of the data centres was unavailable owing to system failure, disaster, emergency or scheduled maintenance, all transactions were automatically directed in a seamless manner to the functioning data centre, which would absorb 100 per cent of the workload without interruption of service. The Committee was informed that, given the latest technological developments and the current configuration, from an ICT point of view there was no primary or secondary site, but rather two mirrored sites at Brindisi and Valencia, and the designation "secondary" was no longer relevant or applicable.

50. The Advisory Committee recalls that it did not support the Secretary-General's earlier proposal, and indicated at the time that the proposal to locate the leadership of the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies in Valencia did not conform to its mandated role as secondary active telecommunications facility and for hosting the enterprise data centres and enterprise applications (see A/68/782/Add.8, paras. 16-20). **In the light of the updated information provided (see para. 49 above), it is apparent to the Advisory Committee that the facility in Valencia is no longer a secondary active telecommunications facility, since the enterprise data centre in Valencia and the related ICT sections mirror those in Brindisi. Therefore, the Committee does not object to the relocation from Brindisi to Valencia of the post of Chief of the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies. The Committee reiterates its recommendations set out above regarding the need for the prudent use of travel resources as well as the requirement for General Assembly authorization for the relocation of posts and positions between Brindisi and Valencia and vice versa (see para. 34 above).**

Implementation of a coordination framework for the provision of ICT services to external entities

51. The Secretary-General states his intention to establish a post of Senior ICT Coordinator at the P-5 level, funded through extrabudgetary funds, to: (a) manage the provision of ICT services to entities that are not supported by the Department of Field Support; (b) ensure transparency with respect to funds recovered and resources utilized to provide those services; and (c) manage and oversee the relationship with those external entities (see A/69/733/Rev.1, para. 23). **Given the large number of entities served by UNLB (ibid., paras. 37 and 38; see also para. 53 below), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in his future performance reports and budget proposals for UNLB, for information purposes, an overview of the extrabudgetary funds made available to UNLB, the resources utilized (including personnel) and the services provided to external entities.**

Expansion of the current capacity of the facility in Valencia

52. In paragraph 24 of the proposed budget, the Secretary-General indicates that the facility in Valencia has reached its maximum capacity and that he has initiated discussions with the host Government to explore options for expanding the current capacity. In response to its requests for clarification on a number of issues regarding the proposal, the Advisory Committee was informed that:

- The rationale for the proposal was based on the potential growth of the Valencia and Brindisi facilities as a result of the efforts to centralize ICT capacities, as well as the possible future expansion of additional remote mission support services that could be provided from the Global Service Centre. On the basis of the MINUSMA and MINUSCA pilot initiatives, the Secretariat considered the remote mission support services model to be viable;

- The Secretariat did not have any plans to transfer any activities from Brindisi to Valencia or to use the Valencia facility for anything other than provision of ICT services;

- The costs of the maintenance and operations of the facility in Valencia were fully outsourced and included contracts for the provision of services in the following areas: security (313,200 euros per year); cleaning (54,000 euros per year); gardening (25,000 euros per year); and facility management (37,776 euros per year);

- The facility could provide desk spaces for 262 personnel, of which 10 desk spaces were available. At present, a total of 281 personnel (33 Secretariat staff, 110 UNOPS personnel, 88 International Computing Centre personnel and 50 contractors) were registered at the facility, including support contractors and Network Control Centre operators who do not require workspaces. A total of 37 of the 281 personnel were hosted on a cost recovery basis and comprised International Computing Centre personnel providing shared services to non-Department of Field Support entities (see A/69/733/Rev.1, para. 38);[4]

- The cost recovery rate applied was based on the apportionment of the overall operations/support costs against the total number of personnel utilizing the facility. The rate had been established in conjunction with the Office of the Controller and was reviewed annually;

- The International Computing Centre had indicated that it could redeploy an additional 50 personnel to provide support to non-Department of Field Support entities (on a cost recovery basis) should the capacity be available at the Valencia facility.

53. The Advisory Committee was also provided with the table below, showing the total number of personnel located in Brindisi and Valencia, with a breakdown of Secretariat personnel as well as International Computing Centre, UNOPS and third-party contractual personnel.

[4] As indicated in paragraph 38 of the proposed budget, UNLB provides telecommunications services to all special political missions as well as to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials and the International Criminal Court, offices away from Headquarters (the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna) and several United Nations agencies, funds and programmes (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Food Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala).

	Number of personnel		
	Brindisi	*Valencia*	*Total*
Secretariat	423	33	**456**
UNOPS	25	110	**135**
International Computing Centre	49	88	**137**
Contractual/consultancy	102	50	**152**
Total	**599**	**281**	**880**

54. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, the responses provided to its initial queries raise further questions about the Secretary-General's approach. It is not clear to the Committee why the United Nations should be planning to increase the capacity of the facility in Valencia, given that only 33 of the 262 desk spaces are occupied by Secretariat personnel. The Committee is of the view that, should a need for greater capacity arise, priority should be given to housing Secretariat personnel, rather than contractual personnel, at the facility in Valencia. Furthermore, the Committee is of the view that, at this stage, the potential need to expand the provision of remote support services from Valencia to all field missions remains hypothetical, given, inter alia, that: (a) a proposal for a global service delivery model for the United Nations has yet to be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly; (b) a cost/benefit analysis or assessment of the improvements in the quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the provision of remote mission support services from Valencia has not yet been conducted; and (c) a proposal aimed at expanding the provision of remote mission support services for all missions from the facility in Valencia has not been developed or submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. In view of the foregoing, the Committee sees no need, at this stage, for the Secretary-General to pursue the exploration of options for expanding the current capacity of the facility in Valencia.**

55. **In view of the large number of non-Secretariat personnel hosted, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include, in future performance reports and budget submissions regarding UNLB, information on all of the personnel occupying the facilities in Brindisi and Valencia, with a breakdown by office/department/mission for Secretariat personnel or by affiliated entity/organization for other personnel, as well as details on administrative and cost recovery arrangements, rental and maintenance costs, income received and any other relevant information on the utilization of United Nations premises.**

Designation of the facility in Valencia

56. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolution 63/262, relating to information and communications technology, the General Assembly approved the proposal of the Secretary-General to host a secondary active telecommunications facility in Valencia to support peacekeeping activities. In that resolution, the Assembly decided not to proceed at that stage with plans to host computing and data storage equipment relating to Secretariat business continuity operations and enterprise solutions. Subsequently, in its resolution 66/246, the General Assembly

authorized the Secretary-General to implement two enterprise data centres, one at UNLB and one at the secondary telecommunications facility in Valencia, for the hosting of enterprise applications such as Umoja, Inspira and other systems to be used by the entire Secretariat, based on the proposals set out in his report on enterprise ICT initiatives for the United Nations Secretariat (A/66/94).

57. In his reports on the global field support strategy, the Secretary-General has referred to the facility in Valencia under different titles, including the United Nations Support Base in Valencia. The Advisory Committee considers that the above-mentioned designation of the facility in Valencia does not accurately reflect the dedicated use of the facility for ICT infrastructure purposes only. In the proposed budget for UNLB, the Secretary-General refers to the ICT facilities in Brindisi and Valencia as the "twin technology centres", which appears to be a more accurate reflection of their functions. **The Advisory Committee continues to believe that there is a need to apply a consistent designation of the facility throughout the documents submitted for consideration by the Assembly. It therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit for its consideration proposals for the official designation of the facility in Valencia that are consistent with its use for ICT purposes.**

B. Resource requirements

58. The proposed budget for UNLB for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 amounts to $71,696,000 gross ($65,324,300 net), representing an increase of $1,204,000 in gross terms, or 1.9 per cent, compared with the apportionment of $70,338,600 for 2014/15. The budget provides for the deployment of 125 international staff, 292 national staff and 39 temporary positions funded under general temporary assistance.

1. Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2014/15*[a]	*Proposed 2015/16*[a]	*Variance*
International staff	127	125	(2)
National staff	284	292	8
Temporary positions[b]	13	39	26

[a] Represents the highest level of authorized/proposed strength.
[b] Funded under general temporary assistance.

59. The estimated requirements for civilian personnel for the 2015/16 period amount to $43,884,600, representing a decrease of $911,400, or 2.0 per cent, compared with the apportionment of $44,796,000 for 2014/15. The overall decrease reflects the net effect of both higher and lower requirements for civilian personnel compared with the current period. Lower requirements are proposed for: (a) international staff ($2,145,500, or 9.6 per cent), owing primarily to a decrease of 23 per cent in the post adjustment factor; and (b) national staff ($1,302,400, or 6.1 per cent), owing to the application of a higher exchange rate of the euro against the United States dollar based on the latest exchange rate at the time of budget preparation, offset in part by the proposed establishment of eight national posts. The lower requirements under international and national staff are offset in part by higher

requirements under general temporary assistance ($2,536,500, or 217 per cent) for the proposed net increase of 26 positions, offset in part by a decrease by 23 points of the post adjustment multiplier starting in January 2015 and the application of a higher exchange rate of the euro against the United States dollar, based on the latest exchange rate at the time of the preparation of the budget.

60. Information on the vacancy factors used to estimate costs for the 2015/16 period is provided in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the proposed budget. The proposed budget for 2015/16 provides for lower vacancy rates of 9 per cent for international staff, excluding the tenant units, and 4 per cent for national staff, compared with the rates of 12 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, applied in the current period. With respect to temporary positions, the proposed budget for 2015/16 provides for a lower vacancy rate of 9 per cent for international positions compared with the 30 per cent rate budgeted in 2014/15 and for a 33.3 per cent rate for national positions, compared with the 30 per cent rate applied in the current period. With respect to tenant units, the proposed vacancy factor for international staff remains unchanged at 15 per cent and the proposed vacancy factor for national staff is reduced to 0 per cent from 6 per cent in the current period. The Secretary-General indicates that the proposed vacancy factors for 2015/16 reflect the latest actual incumbency levels and trends at the time of the preparation of the budget.

61. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with the following table, showing vacancy rates for posts and temporary positions at UNLB, as follows: (a) the actual vacancy rates for the 2013/14 period; (b) for the 2014/15 period, the budgeted vacancy rates, the actual rates as at 31 January 2015 and the actual average vacancy rates from 1 July 2014 to 31 January 2015; and (c) the proposed vacancy factors for 2015/16.

(Percentage)

UNLB, excluding tenant units

	2013/14	*2014/15*			*2015/16*	
Category	*Actual*	*Budgeted*	*Actual as at 31 January 2015*	*Actual average, 1 July 2014 to 31 January 2015*	*Proposed*	*Proposed number of personnel*
International staff	9.5	12.0	8.3	9.5	9.0	82
National General Service staff	5.0	6.0	4.3	3.9	4.0	287
Temporary positions						
International staff	–	30.0	60.0	80.0	9.0	17
National General Service staff	33.3	30.0	50.0	50.0	33.0	22

Tenant units

Category	2013/14	2014/15			2015/16	
	Actual	Budgeted	Actual as at 31 January 2015	Actual average, 1 July 2014 to 31 January 2015	Proposed	Proposed number of personnel
International staff	17.4	15.0	18.6	16.3	15.0	43
National General Service staff	–	6.0	–	–	–	5

62. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that budgeted vacancy rates should be based, as much as possible, on actual vacancy rates. In cases in which the proposed budgeted rates differ from the actual rates at the time of budget preparation, clear justification should be provided in related budget documents for the rates used. In view of the foregoing, the Committee recommends for UNLB personnel, excluding tenant units, the application of vacancy factors of 60 per cent for international positions, 50 per cent for national General Service positions and 5 per cent for national staff, taking into account the proposed establishment of eight national posts. The Advisory Committee also recommends the application of a vacancy factor of 17 per cent for international posts of tenant units. Any related operational costs should be adjusted as appropriate.**

Recommendations on posts and positions

63. The Secretary-General proposes a net increase of 32 posts and positions as a result of a net increase of 26 general temporary positions and 8 national General Service posts and a reduction of 2 international posts. This reflects the combined effects of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, which comprise: (a) the establishment of 32 additional general temporary assistance positions; (b) the conversion of 6 general temporary assistance positions to national General Service posts; (c) the establishment of 2 posts (1 P-4 and 1 national General Service); (d) the abolishment of 2 posts (1 Field Service and 1 national General Service); and (e) the conversion of 1 P-2 post to a national General Service post. In addition, it is proposed that one P-4 post be reclassified as a P-5 post. A detailed summary of the proposed staffing changes is presented in annex II to the present report. **Except as otherwise indicated, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals.**

New posts and positions

Field Central Review Board Unit/Reference Verification Unit

64. In the Reference Verification Unit of the Field Central Review Board Unit (see A/9/733/Rev.1, paras. 44-48), the Secretary-General proposes: (a) the conversion of six existing general temporary assistance positions to national General Service posts, owing to the continuous nature of the reference verification function; and (b) the establishment of four additional general temporary assistance national General Service positions, to provide additional capacity to clear the backlog of some 5,000 pending reference verification cases before the implementation of the global mobility programme. The Secretary-General indicates that the existing six

staff members are not able to complete this activity in addition to their current annual workload of some 1,250 reference verification cases. Upon enquiry as to the difference in the manpower requirements for the reference verification of 5,000 backlog cases and 1,250 annual cases, the Advisory Committee was informed that the verification of the backlog cases was related to the regularization of serving staff members and that it required less time and effort than the verification of external candidates. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that further efforts should be made to accelerate the reference verification process, and considers that the six existing staff members can address some of the backlog cases. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve two instead of the proposed four additional general temporary assistance national General Service positions to clear the backlog of cases to be verified. Any post-related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

Geospatial Information Services Centre

65. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of an additional six general temporary assistance positions (1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 4 national General Service) for the Geospatial Information Services Centre (see A/69/733/Rev.1, paras. 19-21 and 70 and 71). The Advisory Committee recalls that in its resolution 68/284, the General Assembly approved a total of seven positions (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 2 P-2, 1 Field Service and 2 national General Service) for the Geospatial Information Services Centre, thereby doubling the staffing complement of the Centre to a total of 14 posts and positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 P-2, 2 Field Service and 6 national General Service). **Taking into account its existing capacity and the recent addition of seven new positions to the Geospatial Information Services Centre, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of four positions (1 P-2 and 3 national General Service) of the six proposed. The Committee recommends against the approval of the one P-4 and one national General Service positions proposed for the Centre. Any post-related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.** The Committee comments further on the restructuring of geospatial information services in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/69/839).

2. Operational costs

(United States dollars)

Apportionment 2014/15	*Proposed 2015/16*	*Variance*
25 542 600	27 811 400	2 268 800

66. The proposed operational costs for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 are estimated at $27,811,400, representing an increase of $2,268,800, or 8.9 per cent, compared with the apportionment for the current period. The net increase reflects mainly higher requirements under official travel ($230,000, or 23 per cent), facilities and infrastructure ($1,037,800, or 14.4 per cent), ground transportation ($492,100, or 86.3 per cent) and other supplies, services and equipment ($596,400, or 64.4 per cent). As indicated in paragraph 6 above, the variances shown under communications and information technology are due mainly to the fact that assets such as network switches, routers and the related spare parts, previously budgeted under information technology, are now budgeted under communications, in

accordance with the new chart of accounts. Similarly, training consultancy is now budgeted under other supplies, services and equipment. **Except as otherwise indicated below, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the Secretary-General's proposals regarding operational costs.**

Cost apportionment

67. The Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/69/839) includes observations and recommendations with respect to those costs that the Secretary-General proposes be apportioned to individual mission budgets, including applications developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and deployed to the field and the additional requirements relating to the supply chain initiative. **The Advisory Committee does not concur with the Secretary-General's proposal that the missions be charged for the entirety of these costs and recommends that the proposed resource requirements for individual missions be reduced accordingly.** The relevant table in the report on cross-cutting issues contains a summary of the Committee's recommended reductions by mission. **In the case of UNLB, this recommendation will result in reductions of $12,478 from the requirements for information technology, $11,200 for consultancy services and $16,800 for official travel.**

Official travel

68. A total amount of $1,230,000 is proposed under official travel for the 2015/16 period, reflecting an increase of $230,000, or 23.0 per cent, compared with the current period. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a total of 230 trips were planned in the 2015/16 period, comprising 86 within-mission and 144 out-of-mission-area trips. The Committee recalls that a total of 58 within-mission trips were planned in the 2014/15 period and that 37 such trips were reported in the 2012/13 period (see A/68/782/Add.8, para. 37). **The Advisory Committee was provided with further details on the proposed travel, including details on the purpose, origin and destination of trips, which showed, in the Committee's view, that there were some possibilities for combining trips and further optimizing the use of travel resources. The Committee also believes that further efforts can be made to use alternative methods of communication such as videoconferencing.** For example, the Committee was informed upon enquiry that the number of videoconferences proposed for the Field Contracts Management Unit in 2015/16 was lower than that in the prior period because, in addition to conducting videoconferences, the Unit had established active interaction with missions through the use of tools such as communities of practice and e-mail.

69. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the proposed increase under official travel for additional within-mission trips (see A/69/733/Rev.1, para. 86) was related to requirements for coordination activities following the unification of the currently mirrored sections of the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies in Brindisi and Valencia (ibid., paras. 14 and 57; see also para. 33 above). **The Advisory Committee is not convinced as to the need for increased travel to ensure such coordination. The Committee stresses the need to ensure that official travel between the two sites is kept to a minimum and that resources for official travel are utilized prudently, only after due consideration has been given to all alternative means of communication and to**

combining travel whenever possible. The Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed requirement for 2015/16 for training-related official travel would increase from the apportionment of $328,200 in the current period to a proposed amount of $391,000 in 2015/16, reflecting an increase of $62,800, or 19.1 per cent (see also para. 70 below).

70. **The Advisory Committee is concerned about this upward trend in the number of trips as well as the increase in the resources proposed for travel. It would have expected a decrease in both the frequency and the costs of official travel, taking into account the availability of an increased number of videoconferencing facilities and alternative communications tools as well as the efficiencies expected following the adoption of measures pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 65/268 and 67/254 A concerning official travel.** In that connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, at the time of its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the standards of accommodation for air travel (A/69/787), it had been informed that the average ticket price at Headquarters had been reduced by 8.9 per cent in 2014 compared with 2013. **The Advisory Committee considers that efforts to reduce requirements for official travel should be made and recommends that the General Assembly reduce the proposed requirement for official travel by 10 per cent in addition to the reduction recommended in paragraph 67 above.**

Communications

71. A total amount of $8,095,600 is proposed under communications for the 2015/16 period, reflecting an increase of $1,081,400, or 15.4 per cent, compared with the current period. As indicated in paragraph 6 above, the increase is due in part to the recording of expenditures under the new chart of accounts (see also A/69/733/Rev.1, para. 89). The Advisory Committee observes that actual expenditures incurred during the 2013/14 period amounted to $4,851,800, reflecting underexpenditure of 29 per cent compared with the apportionment of $6,834,800. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that for the current financial period as at 31 January 2015, actual expenditures recorded under this category of expenditure amounted to $2,217,800, against an apportionment of $7,014,200, and that an unencumbered balance of $2,372,200 (33.8 per cent) was projected at the end of the period. **Taking into account the pattern of expenditure, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly reduce the level of the proposed resources under communications for the 2015/16 period by 10 per cent.**

Consultants/other supplies, services and equipment

72. The table under paragraph 78 of the proposed budget shows that the total resources proposed for training in 2015/16 amount to $1,028,000 (comprising $133,000 under consultants, for training consultants; $391,000 under travel, for training-related travel (see para. 69 above); and $504,000 under other supplies, services and equipment, for training fees, supplies and services), compared with total training costs of $835,000 for 2014/15. The table under paragraph 79 of the budget documents shows a sharp increase in the number of internal training participants, from 84 in 2013/14, 201 in 2014/15 to 1,019 proposed for 2015/16.

73. As indicated in paragraph 6 above, certain expenditures recorded under consultants prior to the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting

Standards are now categorized under other supplies, services and equipment in the new chart of accounts, which makes it difficult to compare the evolution of the resource requirements and actual expenditures under those two categories of expenditure between the current and budget periods. In order to facilitate its review, the Advisory Committee considered the aggregated resources proposed under consultants and other supplies, services and equipment. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with additional information on current and projected expenditures for 2014/15 showing that as at 31 January 2015, the aggregated expenditures incurred under these two lines of expenditure totalled $313,400 and the projected expenditure for the remaining period from 1 February to 30 June was estimated at $1,305,100. This resulted in total expected expenditure of $1,618,500 for the current period, reflecting expected overexpenditure of $209,900, or 6.4 per cent, compared with the apportionment of $1,418,500. The aggregated resources proposed for these two lines of expenditure for 2015/16 amount to $1,955,200, reflecting an increase of $536,700, or 37.8 per cent, compared with the apportionment of $1,418,500 for 2014/15 and an increase of $336,700, or 23.0 per cent, compared with the total projected expenditure of $1,628,400 for the current period (see table below).

74. **In view of the current pattern of expenditures for these two categories, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the proposed increase of 37.8 per cent is not warranted and recommends a reduction of 5 per cent in the total resources proposed under consultants and other supplies, services and equipment in addition to the reduction recommended for consultants in paragraph 67 above.**

Aggregated requirements for consultants and other supplies, services and equipment

(United States dollars)

2014/15				*2015/16*		
Apportionment	*Actual expenditures as at 31 January 2015*	*Projected expenditure 1 February-30 June 2015*	*Projected expenditures*	*Proposed*	*Variance*	*Variance*
(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d)*	*(e)*	*(e-a)*	*(e-d)*
1 418 500	313 400	1 305 100	1 618 500	1 955 200	536 700	336 700
					(38.7%)	(23.0%)

V. Other matters

Strategic deployment stocks

75. As shown in part V of the budget performance report (A/69/585 and Corr.1), the replenishment value of the strategic deployment stocks issued to special political and peacebuilding missions and other recipients in the 2013/14 period totalled $5,895,900, comprising: Department of Safety and Security (in the Syrian Arab Republic), $52,700; Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, $3,600; Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, $1,803,600; United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, $322,600; United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic,

$1,925,100; United Nations Support Mission in Libya, $1,740,400; and United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, $47,900.

76. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in paragraph 39 of its previous report (A/68/782/Add.8), it had recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide detailed information in his next report on UNLB on the review of the level and composition of the strategic deployment stocks, including information on inventory, both prior to and following the reduction in June 2012, and the efficiencies subsequently realized in the management of the strategic deployment stocks. In section V of the proposed budget, the Secretary-General indicates that the review of the level and composition of the strategic deployment stocks is under way and that an update on the composition and the level will be provided upon the completion of the review. **The Advisory Committee expects that details on the outcome of the review will be provided in the Secretary-General's next submissions on UNLB.**

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

77. The action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNLB for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 is indicated in paragraph 30 of the budget performance report (A/69/585 and Corr.1). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of $20,800, as well as the income and adjustments in the amount of $1,833,700, be credited to Member States in a manner to be determined by the Assembly.**

78. The action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNLB for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 is indicated in paragraph 92 of the proposed budget (A/69/733/Rev.1). **In view of its recommendations in paragraphs 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 71 and 74 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the estimated budget requirement be reduced by $3,285,558, from $71,696,000 to $68,410,442. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the amount of $68,410,442 for the maintenance of UNLB for the 12-month period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016;**

(b) **Prorate the amount set out in subparagraph (a) among the individual active peacekeeping operation budgets to meet the financing requirements of UNLB for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.**

Documentation

- Report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/585 and Corr.1)
- Report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/733/Rev.1)
- Report of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the 12-month period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/5 (Vol. II))
- General Assembly resolutions 67/288 and 68/284, on the financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy
- Fifth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/69/651)
- Report of the Secretary-General on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/751/Rev.1)

Annex I

Summary of proposed staffing changes for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016

	Within UNLB		*New to UNLB*		
Office Section Unit	*Number*	*Level*	*Number*	*Level*	*Description*
Office of the Director					
Immediate Office of the Director			+1	P-4	Establishment of a new post of Conduct and Discipline Officer
	-1	P-3			Redeployed to the proposed Finance and Budget Section
	-1	FS			
Finance and Budget Section	+1	P-4			Proposed establishment of the Finance and Budget Section; redeployed from the immediate Office of the Director and the Finance Section of the Base Support Service
	+1	P-3			
	+2	FS			
	+10	NGS			
Security Office			+1	NGS	Establishment of a new post of Occupational Safety Officer
Field Contracts Management Unit	-1	P-2			Nationalization of 1 post
	+1	NGS			
Field Central Review Board Unit	+6	NGS			Converted from general temporary assistance positions
	-6	NGS			
			+4	NGS	Establishment of general temporary assistance positions in the Reference Verification Unit
	+12		**+6**		
Base Support Service					
Finance Section	-1	P-4			Redeployed to the proposed Finance and Budget Section of the Office of the Director
	-1	FS			
	-10	NGS			
	-12		–		
Logistics Service					
Property Management Section	-1	P-2			Nationalization of 1 post
	+1	NGS			
Engineering Standards and Design Centre			+2	FS	Establishment of general temporary assistance positions in support of MINUSCA
	–		**+2**		

Office Section Unit	Within UNLB Number	Within UNLB Level	New to UNLB Number	New to UNLB Level	Description
Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies					
Office of the Chief	+1	P-5			Reclassification of 1 post
	-1	P-4			
Remote Mission Support Section	+1	P-4			Redeployed from the Satellite Engineering Support Section
	+2	NGS			Redeployed from the Data Centre Support Section and the Network Support Section
			+1	P-4	Establishment of general temporary assistance positions in support of MINUSCA
			+2	FS	
			+3	NGS	
			+1	P-4	Establishment of general temporary assistance positions in support of MINUSMA
			+1	P-3	
			+3	FS	
			+9	NGS	
Satellite Engineering Support Section	-1	P-4			Redeployed to the proposed Remote Mission Support Section
Data Centre Support Section	-1	NGS			Redeployed to the proposed Remote Mission Support Section
			-1	FS	Abolishment of 1 post
Network Support Section	-1	NGS			Redeployed to the proposed Remote Mission Support Section
Technology Infrastructure Support Section			-1	NGS	Abolishment of 1 post
Geospatial Information Services Centre			+ 1	P-4	Establishment of general temporary assistance positions
			+1	P-2	
			+4	NGS	
	–		**+24**		
Total	–		**+32**		
International	-2		+1		
National	+8		–		
General temporary assistance					
International positions	–		+12		
National positions	-6		+21		

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; NGS, national General Service.

Annex II

Categories-grades, functional titles and functions of 6 MINUSCA and 14 MINUSMA posts proposed for establishment for the Remote Mission Support Section

MINUSCA posts

Functional title	*Category-grade*	*Number*	*Function*
Information Systems Officer	P-4	1	Oversight of a number of projects, including the "Other 3 billion" project, mobility, firewall implementation, disaster recovery and business continuity plans and operational resilience
Information Technology Officer	FS-6	1	Oversight of all systems engineering activities, including in relation to the active directory, Windows update services and the virtual data centre, and liaison with mission support on monitoring activities
Information Systems Assistant	FS-5	1	Focused on remote support for systems engineering and mail activities
IT Assistant	NGS	3	Support in terms of plans, projects, mail, systems engineering, and disaster recovery and business continuity
Total		**6**	

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; NGS, national General Service.

MINUSMA posts

Functional title	*Category-grade*	*Number*	*Function*
Telecommunications Officer	P-4	1	Oversight of a number of projects, including the "Other 3 billion" project, mobility, firewall implementation, disaster recovery and business continuity plans and operational resilience
Geographic Information Systems Officer	P-3	1	Oversight of a number of cartographic projects
Telecommunications Officer	FS-6	1	Oversight of all network and telephony activities, including in relation to Cisco switches, routers and routing, and liaison with mission support on monitoring activities
IT Officer	FS-6	1	Oversight of all systems engineering activities, including in relation to the active directory, Windows update services and the virtual data centre, and liaison with mission support on monitoring activities
Telecommunications Assistant	FS-5	1	Involvement in all network and telephony activities, including in relation to Cisco switches, routers and routing, and support on monitoring activities
Administrative Assistant	NGS	1	Administrative duties such as human resources and finance support, including Umoja and iNeed support
Information Systems Assistant	NGS	2	Support in terms of plans, projects, mail, systems engineering, and disaster recovery and business continuity

Functional title	*Category-grade*	*Number*	*Function*
Telecommunications Technician	NGS	5	Support on all network and telephony activities, including in relation to Cisco switches, routers and routing, and liaison with mission support on monitoring activities
GIS Assistant	NGS	1	Involvement in cartographic projects
Total		**14**	

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; NGS, national General Service.